

### Human Images among the Orang Mantong.

I have long suspected the existence of *Berhala*, or human images, among the "wild tribes" of the Rhio archipelago, but never actually met with any until the past summer (1903).

When at Pulo Sanglar or Lake Durian, Rhio archipelago, in July. I found two wooden images representing women, in a cave near the sea shore, not far from Kampong Telok Lanun.

Each image is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. One of harder wood was much more carefully carved than the other. It had 3 wooden horns about 6 inches long projecting upwards from the head. These horns were serrated on one edge. This figure also had straight rudely carved arms of soft wood, much decayed.

The teeth were represented by pieces of broken shell. A blackish line extended diagonally across the chest, meeting a horizontal line extending across just above the position of the nipple. A blackish spot was over the position of the heart.

The other figure was very rudely carved of soft white wood and was without arms.

The figures were lying face downward on the floor of the cave and had evidently not been disturbed for months, as roots were growing over them and the wood was beginning to decay.

Pulo Sanglar is inhabited by Orang Mantong, and latterly many Chinese have settled there cultivating gambier.

The Batin of Telok Lamun called himself a *Malay*, but he was more than half Orang Laut.

No true Malays live on Sanglar, but they inhabit the neighbouring small islands. These Malays call all the Sanglar people *Tambus*, except of course the Chinamen, and say there is not a Mussulman. All the Sanglar people eat pig. They are certainly not true *Tambus*. They were very shy, and I had a lot of trouble inducing them to be photographed.

No information in regard to the use of the images could be obtained. Every one denied the existence of such things, not knowing I had already found them.

The images cannot be regarded as true *berhala* or idols. Most probably they are a sort of "*Sakkat buang*" for use in

sickness. Among the Orang Laut when a man is ill, a wooden figure of a bird, snake, fish or other animal is made, and the *pawang* or *bomo* exorcises the hantu or devil in the sick man and drives it into the figure, which is then carried out to sea and thrown overboard. Last year we picked up a wooden bird floating in Durian Strait.

Very likely the human figures were used in the same way, being carried out into the jungle instead of out to sea. Like the Rumah hantu to be seen in the woods near Malay Kampongs. These images resemble the adu adu of Pulo Nias.

*Dr. Abbott.*

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### The Orang Laut of Singapore

In Journal 33, p. 247, Mr. Skeat and I published some notes on the Orang Laut of Singapore, a race very nearly extinct, and of which very little is known, I have since come across an account of them in Finlayson's Mission to Siam and Cochin China, in 1821. The author somewhat naturally mistook them for Malays and thus describes them. "The condition of the lower class of Malays in these parts is wretched beyond what we should conceive to be the lot of humanity in an intertropical climate, almost the whole of their life is spent upon the water in a wretched little canoe in which they can scarce stretch themselves for repose. A man and his wife and one or two children are usually to be found in these miserable sampans; for subsistence they depend on their success in fishing. Their tackling is so rude and scanty that they are often reduced to the most urgent want, when they have made a meal they lay basking in the sun or repose under the dense shade of the mangrove till hunger again calls them into action. They have scarce a rag of cloth to secure them from the scorching noon-day sun or shelter them from the damp and noisome dews and exhalations of night. The women are not less dexterous than the men in managing their boats. Their only furniture consists of one or two cooking pots, an earthen jar and a mat made of the leaves of the Pandanus which serves to protect them from the rain. In the numerous bays inlets and creeks that surround Singapore an inconceivable number of families live in